



NEWS RELEASE

Texas Animal Health Commission

"Serving Texas Animal Agriculture Since 1893"

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 18, 2011

Cattle Brucellosis Found in Herd in Starr County ***Local Producers Urged to Comply with TAHC Regulations***

Austin – A small beef cattle herd in Starr County was recently diagnosed with bovine brucellosis (Bangs.) This is the first time in over five years that a positive Brucellosis cattle herd has been detected in Texas. Routine surveillance (blood testing) at a livestock market led to the discovery of the infected herd.

Brucellosis is a bacterial disease of cattle that can cause abortions, weak calves and low milk production. Humans can also catch brucellosis (undulant fever) most commonly by consuming unpasteurized milk products or handling contaminated birthing material when assisting with difficult calving situations in infected cows. Brucellosis is contagious to cattle and other ruminant animals such as bison.

All herds that are or have been within one mile of the index herds will need to be tested. If a herd has lived within a mile of the index herd in the last ten years, the TAHC will need to test them. Also, the two index premises are 2.75 miles apart and the TAHC is testing herds between the two circles. Cattle that have been sold from the index herd will also be traced and tested. Some herds that are more than a mile from the index herd will also be asked to test. If the TAHC finds more infected herds, the required testing area will be expanded. TAHC officials strongly urge local ranchers who have properties adjacent to the index herds to comply with TAHC testing requirements.

The brucellosis testing is free of charge for herds within the testing area. Some herds will need to be tested a second time, depending on the last possible exposure date. The TAHC offers free calf-hood vaccinations for heifers between 4 and 12 months of age, at the time of testing, for herds within the testing area.

The TAHC reminds Texas producers, marketers and veterinarians that maintaining a Brucellosis-free Texas requires constant awareness and vigilance. Producers/Ranchers should make sure all adult cattle being purchased have a negative test and any cows that abort should be tested for brucellosis. Cooperation is needed to ensure a Brucellosis-free state and healthy cattle.

Texas will not lose its Class Free status as designated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA.) USDA issued an interim rule in 2010 that suspended the provision for possible reclassification of any Class Free State or area to a lower status, and instead encouraged a localized risk based disease management approach. Currently, the only known reservoir for

bovine brucellosis is in elk and bison and is in the U.S. Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) located in parts of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming. The GYA is not considered the likely source of the newly detected Texas herd however, based upon the epidemiological information received to date.

Producers seeking more information on brucellosis or testing may call the local TAHC office at 361-358-3234 or visit the website at www.tahc.state.tx.us.

Founded in 1893, the Texas Animal Health Commission works to protect the health of all Texas livestock, including: cattle, swine, poultry, sheep, goats, equine animals, and exotic livestock.

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